

Galileo Program FAQ



1. Who will be selected to teach the Galileo program next year?

A: We anticipate the current teaching cadre will return next year with no changes. Currently Mr. Marcyan teaches math, Ms. Franklin teaches science, Ms. MacCellan teaches language arts, and Ms. Davis teaches social studies in the seventh grade. In the eighth grade Ms. Freeman teaches math, Ms. Mason teaches language arts, Ms. Grant teaches social studies, and Dr. McMaster teaches science. They are experienced and enthusiastic teachers. One is endorsed in gifted studies. Many of the others are pursuing the gifted endorsement at this time.

2. What will the Galileo curriculum be like?

A: It is an accelerated curriculum that is beyond our advanced curriculum. It includes all state standards for an advanced course plus enrichment opportunities. Homework is no more than an advanced class, although the assignments are different and sometimes take longer to complete. Assessments are focused more on writing, instead of fill in the blank, multiple choice, etc. There is an expectation of independent reading. The pace is slightly quicker than the advanced curriculum. The key point to all of it is to make the students THINK and make connections with the outside world. The curriculum will be a challenge to them intellectually. We also include field experiences, field trips, and guest speakers that are exclusive to this program.

3. Is the Galileo program a district choice program like Edgewood or Cocoa Beach?

A: No, Jefferson is not considered a choice school. Galileo does not fall under the same parameters or deadlines for application to choice schools/programs.

4. Why was the Galileo program created at Jefferson?

A: There are two reasons. First, we are in a situation where we are forced to “compete” with other schools for students. Cocoa Beach has the IB program. Kennedy has the Cambridge program. Edgewood is a school of choice. All of the local high schools have special programs. All of these are designed to attract students. They work very well, and unfortunately they draw students away from us! We saw a need to try to draw back some of the students we lose every year to these other schools. Second, and more important, we wanted to create a program that would better serve the gifted students on our campus.

5. Doesn't this program block students out of electives?

A: No. 7th grade students still have at least one elective course they can choose. Eighth graders can take two electives if they submit a PE waiver. All of these students will be able to take band, chorus, art, etc. as their schedule permits.

6. Is foreign language required?

A: No, but students can choose to take Spanish I as an elective if they meet the requirements.

7. What type of student is successful in this program?

A: It is designed for gifted and academically talented students. Students don't have to be staffed in gifted. All should be self-starters, motivated, conscientious students.

8. How are students selected?

A: First, incomplete applications are not considered. We review all completed applications in a committee formed by our teaching cadre, counselors, and administration. We review grades, test scores, attendance, behavior, writing samples, and teacher recommendations. We select the students we believe have the best chance of being successful in the program based on the information available.

9. Will science fair be required?

A: No. Science Fair was not required component this year. A capstone project will take its place.

10. What is the capstone project?

A: It is a year-long project students will complete with their teachers' direction. The project is designed for them to apply the concepts they learn in class. Students will choose a topic and submit a project proposal for approval. They will have a choice in the final product. Teachers will provide deadlines, spaced throughout the year, for submission of components of the project. Students will be asked to explain their project and its results in writing and present this information to their class mates and parents.

11. I've heard there is a lot of homework involved in the program. Is this true?

A: The amount of homework is reasonable. We require the teachers to space tests and projects so everything is not due at once. Assignments tend to be more difficult in this program, so it may take longer for your child to complete them, but the amount of work is about the same as for a student taking an advanced class. If your child signs up for Algebra I Honors or Spanish I you can expect homework in those classes almost every night with other subjects having homework less frequently.

12. Does my child take all of their classes with Galileo students?

A: No. The students form a cohort and take language arts, science, social studies, and possibly math together (it depends on the math course chosen). They will take elective classes with students from other teams and grade levels.

13. My child is very active outside of school in athletics, cheerleading, and other activities. Can a student handle the Galileo work load and keep these activities in place?

A: It depends on the child. We have students in the program that are very active in athletics and still manage to keep excellent grades. Prioritization, organization, and family support are essential in these cases. Again, the amount of homework is reasonable. You would want to talk to your child and decide if an extracurricular activity will interfere with their school work.

14. Why would I want to send my child to Jefferson instead of Edgewood or Cocoa Beach?

A: Edgewood and Cocoa Beach are excellent schools as evidenced by their high test scores. Even so, we feel that you should consider Jefferson if you are considering those schools. We have been an A

school for twelve straight years. Our test scores are competitive with the choice schools and among the highest of middle schools in Brevard County. We have been recognized as a national model professional learning community. This recognition speaks to the high degree of collaboration that exists on our campus among our faculty. We offer a variety of programs and activities that provide your child with a well-rounded education. Band, chorus, orchestra, future problem solving, robotics, and science fair teams earn awards each year. Our Galileo Program exists to serve our gifted and academically talented program, but our advanced courses are the exact same as those taught at the choice schools. We use the same textbooks and teach the same standards. In addition, we have a very high amount of parent and community involvement in our school. We do not require it by contract. Our parents provide it willingly and our students benefit from it. Jefferson is truly a community school, an excellent academic school, and a compelling choice for any family considering their options in Brevard County.